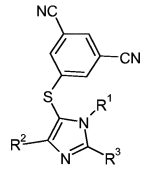
CLAIMS

1. A compound of formula (I)



(I)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or derivative thereof, wherein:
R^1 is C_{1-4} alkyl or C_{3-6} cycloalkyl, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by pyridyl or pyridyl N-oxide;
R^2 is C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{3-6} cycloalkyl, or trifluoromethyl;
R^3 is $-(CH_2)_m OR^4$, $-(CH_2)_m OC(O)NH_2$, $-(CH_2)_m NH_2$, or $-(CH_2)_m NHC(O)NH_2$;
R^4 is H or C_{1-4} alkyl;
m is 1, 2, 3 or 4.

2. A compound according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the following conditions is fulfilled:

- R^1 is methyl, ethyl, i-propyl, cyclopropyl, or pyridylmethyl;
- R^2 is methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, i-propyl, cyclopropyl, or trifluoromethyl;
- R^3 is $-(CH_2)_m OR^4$ or $-(CH_2)_m OC(O)NH_2$;
- R^4 is H.

3. A compound according to claim 1, which is selected from the group consisting of:
5-[3,5-Diethyl-2-(2-hydroxyethyl)-3H-imidazol-4-ylsulfanyl]-isophthalonitrile;
5-[5-Cyclopropyl-3-ethyl-2-(2-hydroxyethyl)-3H-imidazol-4-ylsulfanyl]-isophthalonitrile;
5-[3-Ethyl-2-hydroxymethyl-5-isopropyl-3H-imidazol-4-ylsulfanyl]-isophthalonitrile;
5-[3-Ethyl-2-(2-hydroxyethyl)-5-trifluoromethyl-3H-imidazol-4-ylsulfanyl]-isophthalonitrile;
Carbamic acid 4-Cyclopropyl-5-(3,5-dicyano-phenylsulfanyl)-1-ethyl-1H-imidazol-2-ylmethyl ester;
Carbamic acid 5-(3,5-Dicyano-phenylsulfanyl)-1-ethyl-4-isopropyl-1H-imidazol-2-ylmethyl ester;

Carbamic acid 5-(3,5-dicyano-phenylsulfanyl)-1,4-diethyl-1H-imidazol-2-ylmethyl ester;
Carbamic acid 5-(3,5-dicyano-phenylsulfanyl)-1-ethyl-4-(trifluoromethyl)-1H-imidazol-2-ylmethyl ester;
5-[2-Hydroxymethyl-5-isopropyl-3-(pyridin-4-ylmethyl)-3H-imidazol-4-ylsulfanyl]-isophthalonitrile;
5-[2-(2-Hydroxyethyl)-5-isopropyl-3-methyl-3H-imidazol-4-ylsulfanyl]-isophthalonitrile;
5-[3-Ethyl-2-(2-hydroxyethyl)-5-isopropyl-3H-imidazol-4-ylsulfanyl]-isophthalonitrile;
and pharmaceutically acceptable salts, solvates or derivatives thereof.

4. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of the formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or derivative thereof, according to any of claims 1 to 3, together with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable excipients, diluents or carriers.

5. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 4 including one or more additional therapeutic agents.

6. A compound of formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or derivative thereof according to any of claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 4 or 5, for use as a medicament.

7. A compound of formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or derivative thereof according to any of claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 4 or 5, for use as a reverse transcriptase inhibitor or modulator.

8. A compound of the formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or derivative thereof according to any of claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 4 or 5, for use in the treatment of a HIV, a retroviral infection genetically related to HIV, or AIDS.

9. The use of a compound of the formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or derivative thereof according to any of claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 4 or 5, in the manufacture of a medicament having reverse transcriptase inhibitory or modulating activity.

10. The use of a compound of the formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or derivative thereof according to any of claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 4 or 5, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of a HIV, a retroviral infection genetically related to HIV, or AIDS.

11. A method of treatment of a mammal, including a human being, with a reverse transcriptase inhibitor or modulator, which comprises treating said mammal with an effective amount of a compound of the formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or derivative thereof according to any of claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 4 or 5.

12. A method of treatment of a mammal, including a human being, with a HIV, a retroviral infection genetically related to HIV, or AIDS, which comprises treating said mammal with an effective amount of a compound of the formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or derivative thereof according to any of claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 4 or 5.

13. A process for preparing compounds of formula (I) comprising:
a) alkylation of a compound of formula (II) with R^1X, or
b) reaction of a compound of formula (XIII) with a compound of formula (IV) or (V).

14. A process according to claim 13 wherein the preparation of a compound of formula (II) comprises reacting a compound of formula (III) with a compound of formula (IV) or (V).

15. A compound of formula (II), (III), (IV) or (V).